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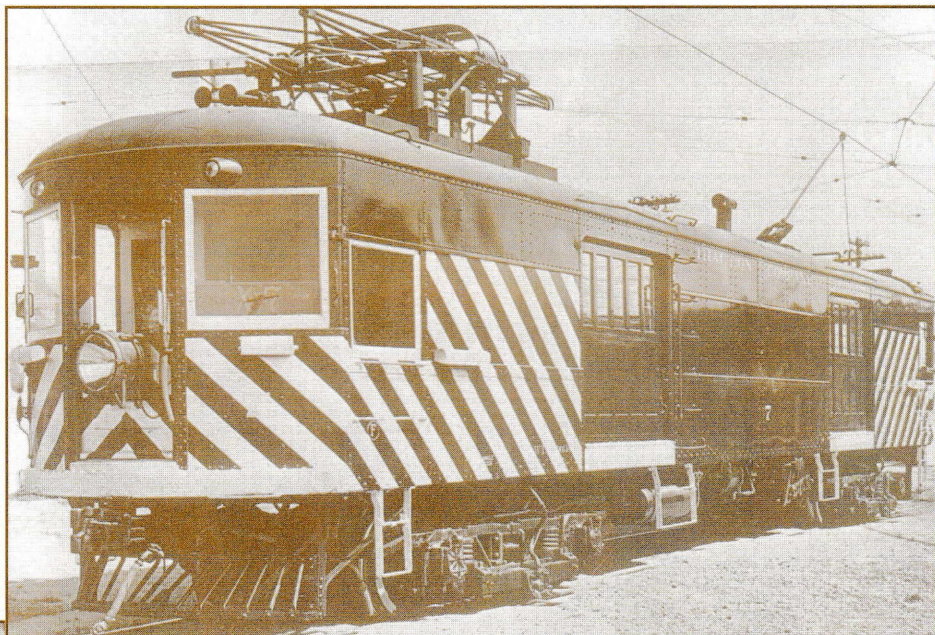
# LODI HISTORIAN

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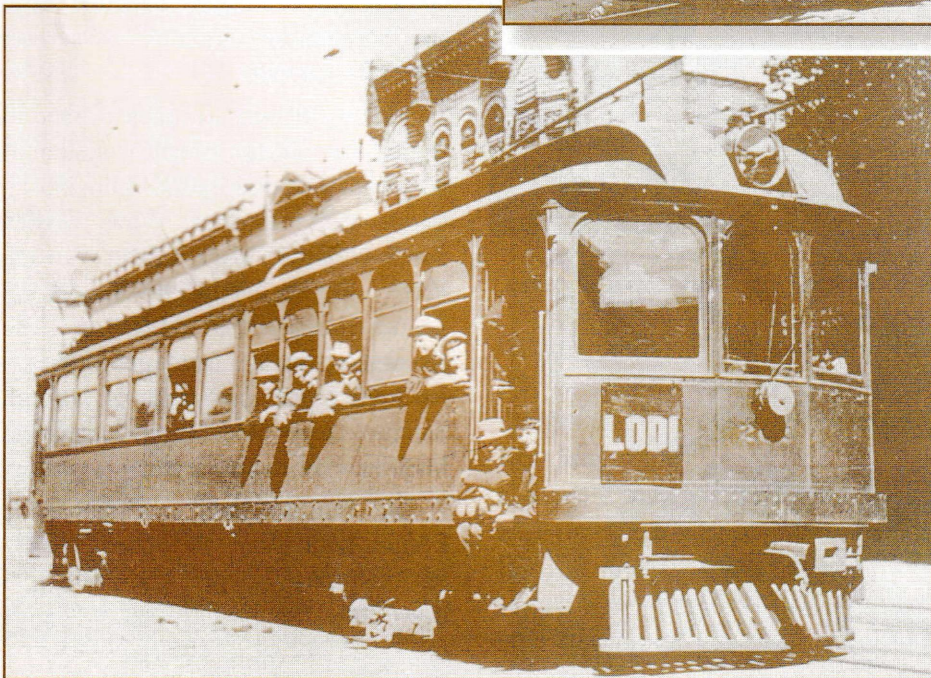
## THE CENTRAL CALIFORNIA TRACTION COMPANY

by Ralph Lea & Janice Roth

Transportation in the early days made use of the waterways carrying freight and passengers from Stockton to Sacramento and San Francisco. In 1869 railroad service became available from Lodi, Stockton and Sacramento connecting to most large cities in the United States through the Central Pacific Railroad Co. The story of the Central California Traction Company starts in Stockton where rapid population growth increased the carriage and wagon traffic setting the scene for the development of a street-car/trolley system. The local traffic problem was partially solved in March of 1874 when the Main Street Trolley



Switch engine with both overhead wire ▲ connection and third rail shoe.



▲ Weber Avenue north of courthouse, circa 1910. Stockton football fans headed for Lodi.  
Photo courtesy of Horace Spencer

Cars, drawn by horses and mules, started in Stockton and quickly expanded. In 1885 it was sold to new investors and renamed the Stockton Electric Railroad Company. About the same time inexpensive hydroelectric power came to Stockton and the city changed from gas light to the bright light of electric power. In July of 1892 the system acquired nine new passenger cars which were converted to receive power from the overhead wire containing 550 volts of direct voltage.

In 1900 Stockton had a population of 14,000. Howard H. Griffiths of Stockton had the idea to evolve the city street car system into a high speed passenger and freight carrier to go 53





▲ Stockton Street R.R. at Weber Avenue, circa.1900.



▲ June 1907; California Traction Company crew covering rails and ties at Sacramento and Pine Streets. The new S.P. Depot is in background, and the foundation for the Tokay Arch is completed.

miles to the north connecting Stockton with the state capital in Sacramento as a traction line.

April 29, 1902 Griffith and his partners, Treadwell and Barnett, were awarded a franchise for a street railroad. It was disallowed, but on January 15, 1904 after bidding \$1,005 the supervisors finally awarded Griffiths the franchise for Stockton.

Herbert and Mortimer Fleishhacker,

owners of the Truckee River General Electric Co. and promoters of the American River Electric Co., along with partners Frank H. Buck and the Schwabacher Brothers were building a generating plant on the South Fork of the American River in Placerville and had completed a 75 mile pole line to Stockton. On January 26, 1904 they were selling electric service in Stockton and Lodi.

A year and a half later Griffiths and his ten partners, the Fleishhacker Brothers, A. Anderson, H.H. Ferns, F.W. Smith, Walter Barnett, J.D. Brown, John Treadwell, Fred West and D.E. Walker made plans to build an inter-urban rail system to serve the near-by towns. They filed Articles of Incorporation for the Central California Traction Company (CCTC) on August 7, 1905 and planned to go north from Stockton through Lodi and Woodbridge with an extension to Walnut Grove.

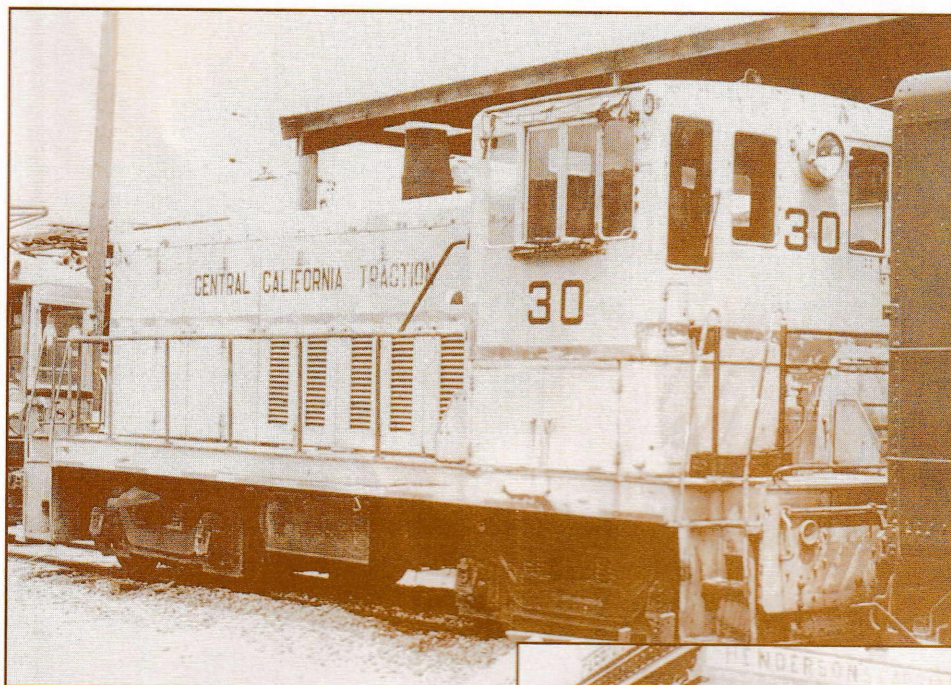
Griffiths made an appearance in Lodi on September 1, 1905 before a crowd of 400 local citizens. He asked for suggestions on a suitable route into town. Everyone wanted the electric railway to pass by their home, store or property.

Tracks were laid down Weber Avenue from El Dorado Street east with overhead trolley wire. The first 32 foot trolley car arrived in Stockton February 4, 1906 and seven more were on order. A car barn and shop building 168 feet by 56 feet was erected on Cherokee Road and Sanguinetti Lane northeast of downtown Stockton. The City Service started on March 3, 1906 with a standard track gauge and 550 volts of direct current obtained from the Fleishhacker Brother's American River Electric Co.

A force of over 100 men worked to extend the railways street car system to 16 streets including San Joaquin, North, Ophir, Park, Yosemite, Vine, Weber, South (Charter Way), Center, Aurora, Flora, Market, Pilgrim, California, Sonora Streets and Scotts Avenue. The streetcars were in operation in Stockton proper by March of 1906. A banquet was held at the Stockton Masonic Hall to celebrate the opening.

A month later the Stockton Evening Mail, a daily newspaper, reported "Streetcars Collide." Car No.101 of the Central California Traction struck the No.12 car of the Stockton Electric Railroad on Weber Ave. at El Dorado where the two lines crossed.





▲ Early 70 ton diesel locomotive that replaced the 44 tonners.

By August of 1906 the final route for the Stockton-Lodi Inter-urban Electric Line was finalized and most rights of way had been obtained. The tracks would continue along Cherokee Lane past the new car barn and then curved northeast as far as the Calaveras River then turned due north along the section line one mile east of the present Highway 99. When it reached the Lodi area it turned west at the old county road that later was named Lodi Avenue. The tracks then turned north at Sacramento Street and continued past Lockeford St.

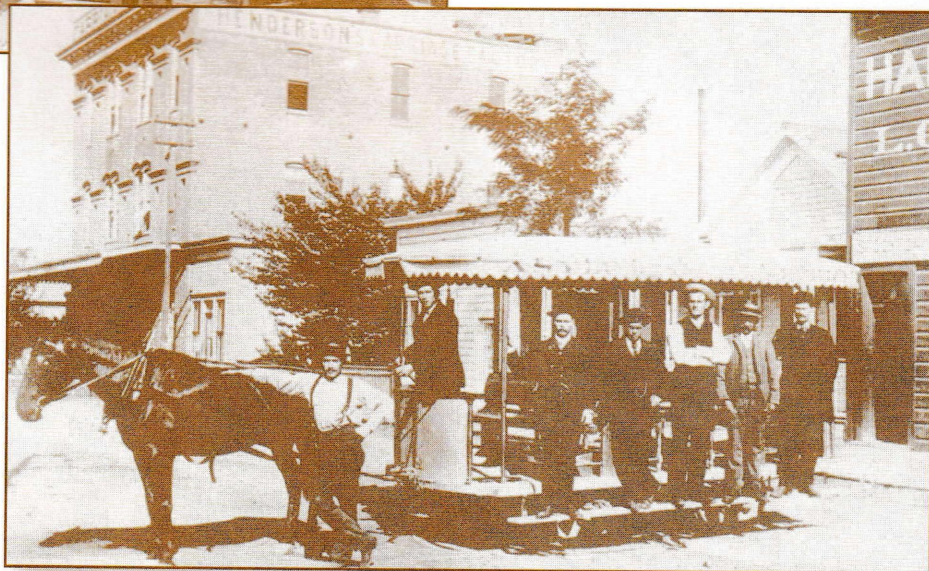
The 550 volts of direct current was supplied by an electrified third rail in the rural areas and by an overhead suspended wire in the towns. Lewis Moreing was the contractor.

Four fifty foot inter-urban electric coaches arrived April 24, 1907 from the American Car Company of St. Lewis, Missouri. Each car was propelled by four 75-horsepower motors that were capable of attaining speeds up to 70 mph. The CCTC also received the first of two double-door freight cars that would be used at the same time.

The winter and spring of 1907 produced a lot of rain that slowed con-

struction of the road bed, but by July excursion trips were offered on the first three miles of completed track from Stockton to a little south of the Calaveras River. Seventy to eighty persons took the round trip for a fare of 20 cents each.

The hot days of July and August helped the track builders reach the Lodi city limits and on August 24th 1907 the track was completed down Lodi Ave. just short of the Southern Pacific Main Line at Seaton Ave.(now Main St.) Six days later the rail was completed north on Sacramento Street to Locust Street. The initial plan was to build to Woodbridge and beyond.



A summer car at Main and American Streets in Stockton. ▲



Stockton Court House, June 15, 1907 ▲





▲ September 21, 1907; Grape Carnival, 1:30 PM Producers' Parade and C.C.T. on right.



▲ Plenty of speakers for the C.C.T. Railway completion on August 31, 1907. It was a "man thing" except for the two ladies in the buggy.

This never happened, but later the line was extended north almost to Turner Road.

A public celebration was held in Lodi on August 31, 1907 to commemorate the completion of the electric railway. At 10:30 a.m. in front of the Lodi Hotel, on Sacramento and Pine Streets, a Golden Spike, provided by

Freidbergers Jewelry Store of Stockton, was driven into place followed by the breaking of a bottle of Lodi wine on the rail. The large crowd listened to speeches by Officials of the Railroad and Lodi, including Hilliard Welch, local banker and store owner. Passenger service from Lodi to Stockton started on Sunday, September 1, 1907 with 15 scheduled round-trips starting at 7:00 a.m. Fifty cents bought a round trip ticket while a one-way fare cost thirty-five cents. The system really was tested a few weeks later when Lodi held its first Tokay Carnival on September 19-21

when thousands visited the celebration.

The electric cars were used as school buses for many of Lodi's rural students. They could catch the train at about 20 different stops and for a few pennies ride to the Salem Grammar School or Lodi High School and return home. Families traveled to Stockton for shopping in the larger stores such as IXL or for a stop at the Novelty Theater. In Stockton boys liked to throw dummies in front of the speeding street cars. Soaping the track at stops was another prank.

In February of 1907, the CCTC made public its intentions to build a railway from Sacramento to Modesto, via Lodi and Stockton, with branches going west to Walnut Grove and east to Calaveras County.

In January of 1908, the first president of CCTC, Walter Bartnett and J. Dalzell Brown were involved in fraud and mismanagement of California Safe Deposit and Trust Co. They subse-



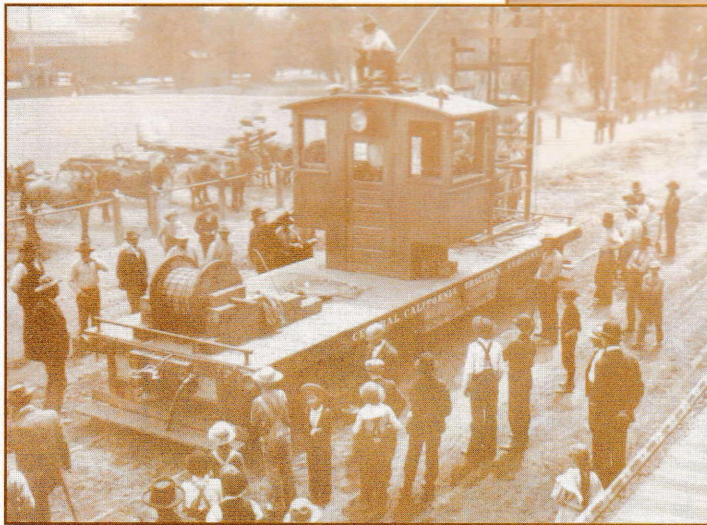
quently were removed from the CCTC Board.

In March of 1908 a new station was established at Wyandotte Ave. eleven miles north of Stockton. A number of new spur tracks were laid in Lodi including an interchange track which permitted the transfer of freight to the Southern Pacific Railroad for direct shipments to the eastern markets. A freight depot was constructed north of Lodi Avenue and just east of the Southern Pacific's main line.

On July 30, 1908 at the age of 38, Howard Harry Griffiths, the person



1907 Tokay Carnival, Lodi Hotel with traction line car. ▲



▲ August 1907; Installing overhead electric line for C.C.T.C. Engine #1, on Sacramento Street in front of the Lodi Hotel.

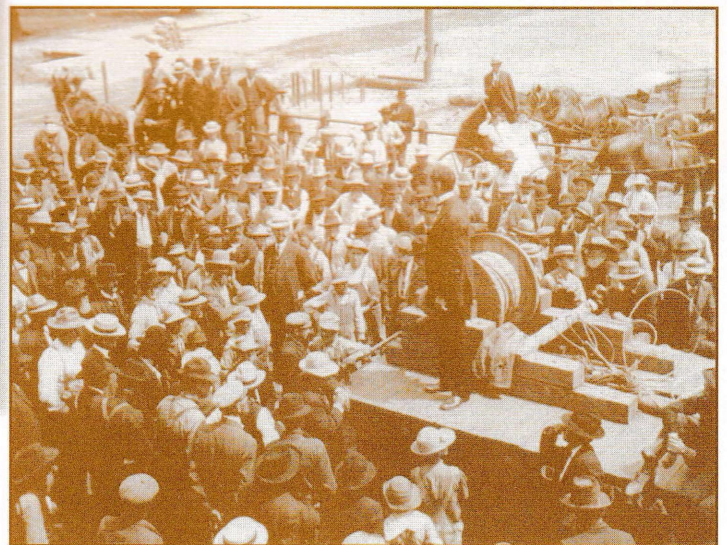
responsible for starting the Central California Traction Co. lost his long battle with cancer.

With the rail business thriving the decision was made to raise the voltage carried by the third-rail power system from 550 volts to 1,200 volts in order to operate a faster service between Stockton and Lodi. The power plant for the Lodi area was situated north of the Harney Lane crossing and was named Ampere Station.

The trains got their power from the moving extension arm touching the third rail. It was covered by a wood shroud to help prevent injury to any animal or human that made contact. Parents warned their children to stay away from the track, but there were

those who jumped over the hot rail. Dogs were often victims of the electricity.

In January of 1909, CCTC executives obtained a franchise to construct its line in Sacramento and by May work was underway and grading had begun north of the Lodi Junction and also south from X or Y Street in Sacramento to the State

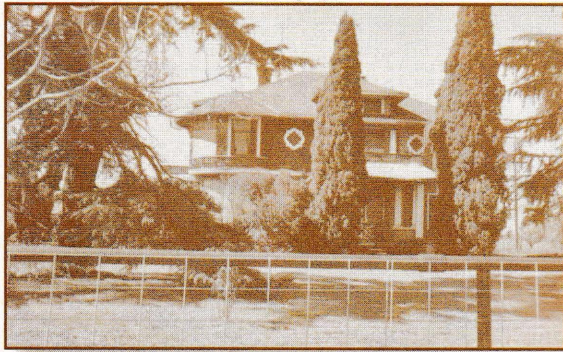


August 31, 1907; A crowd gathers on Sacramento St. in front of the Lodi Hotel to commemorate completion of the electric railway, the foundation for the Mission Arch, and the S.P. Depot. ▲



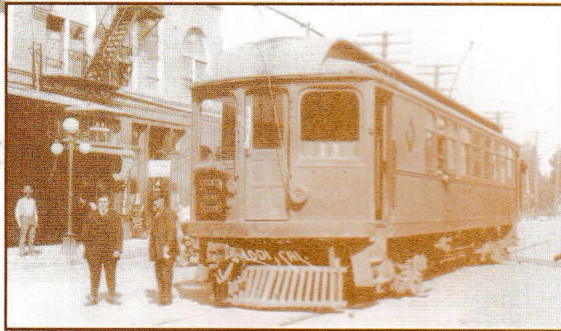
1907; Arch just completed with electric passenger car in front of the Lodi Hotel, Lillie Garage and Bank of Lodi, Pine and Sacramento Streets. ▲





Norma Reeves Photo

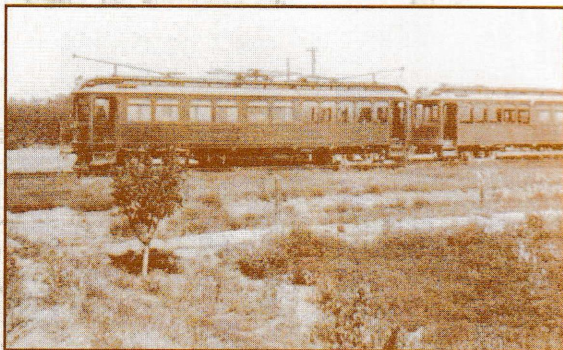
▲ The Jeremiah Kennefick home still standing at the last station on the C.C.T.C. in north San Joaquin County. Kennefick arrived in 1861 and purchased his first ranch of 375 acres.



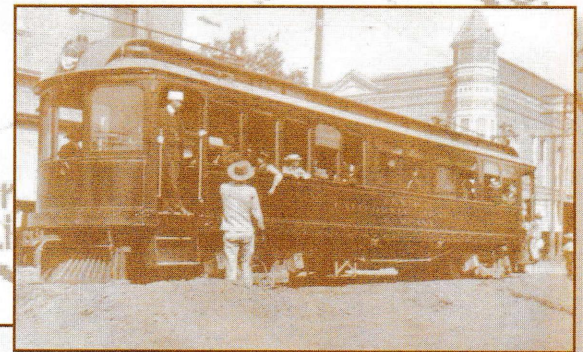
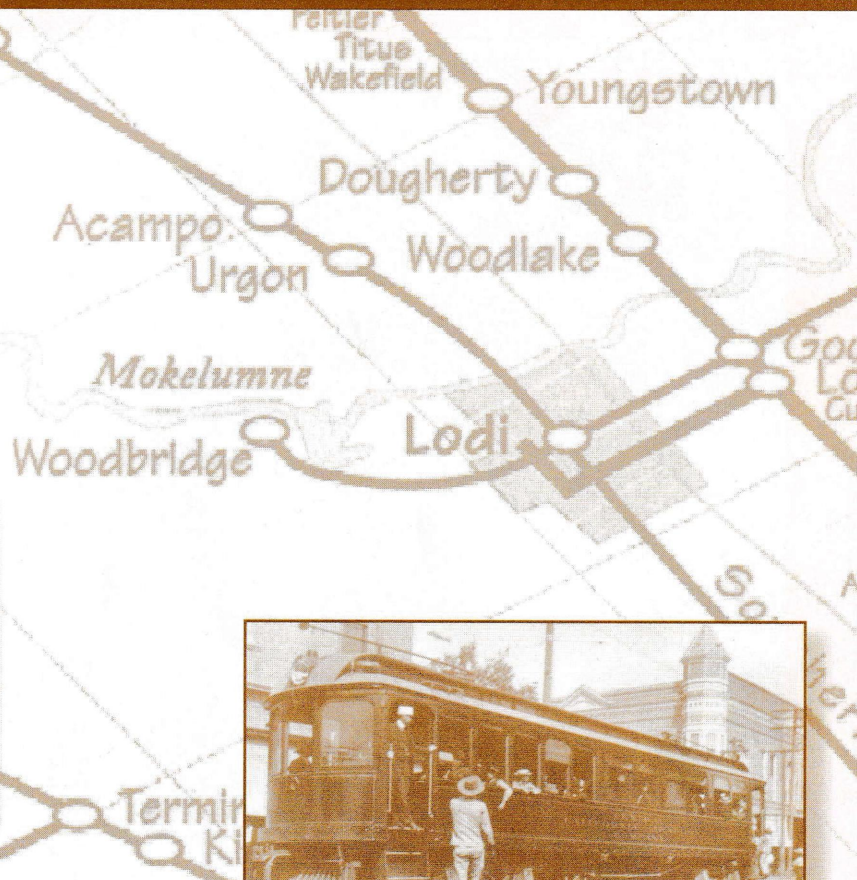
▲ Sacramento Street just north of Elm. Car #11 at Suburban Station passengers at Drug Store and ticket office.



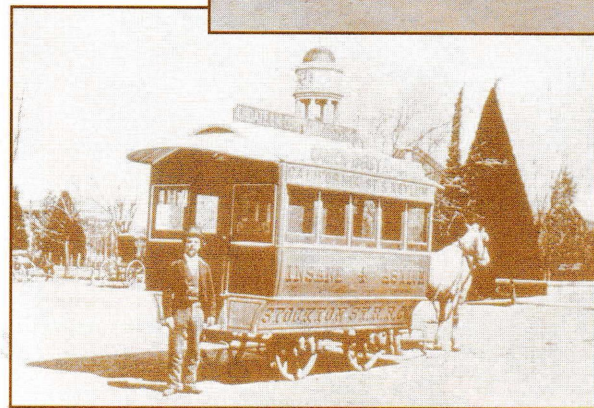
▲ C.C.T.C. Car #102 at Hubbard and Yosemite Buildings in Stockton.



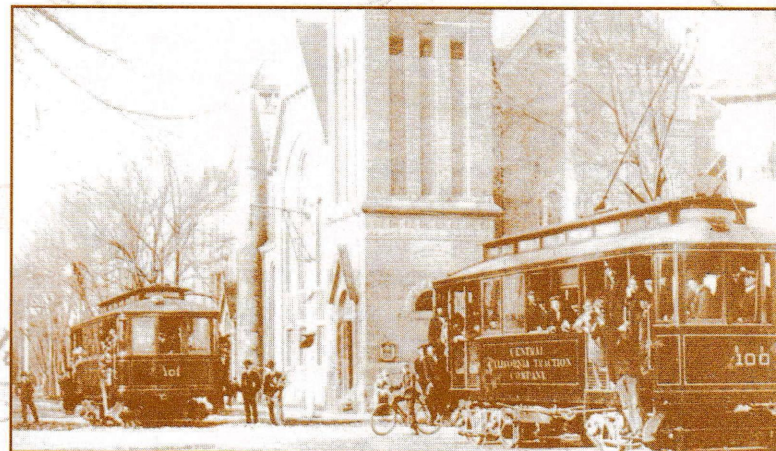
▲ Cars #201 and #203 in the Lodi area with vineyards in background.  
Courtesy the Bank of Stockton Historical Photo Collection.



▲ Sacramento and Elm Streets in Lodi. I.O.O.F. Lodge and Drug Store right rear.

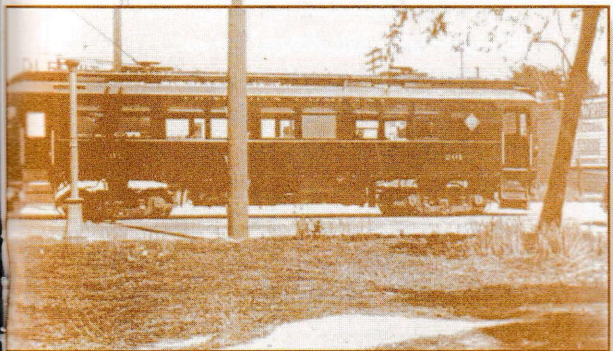


▲ Stockton Street R.R.. Note the first courthouse in background.



▲ San Joaquin St. and Miner Ave. in Stockton. California cars #100 and #101 at



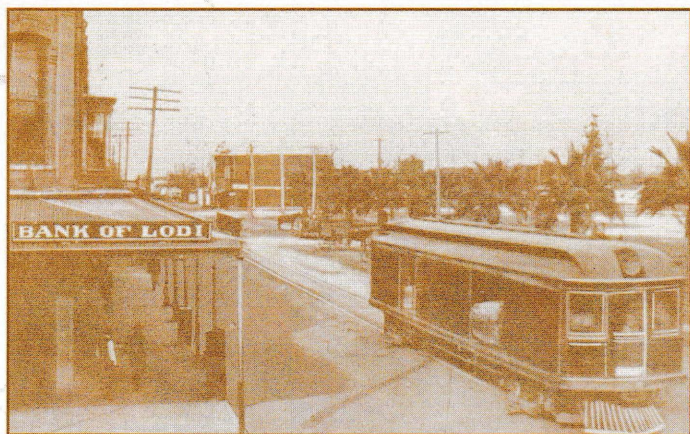
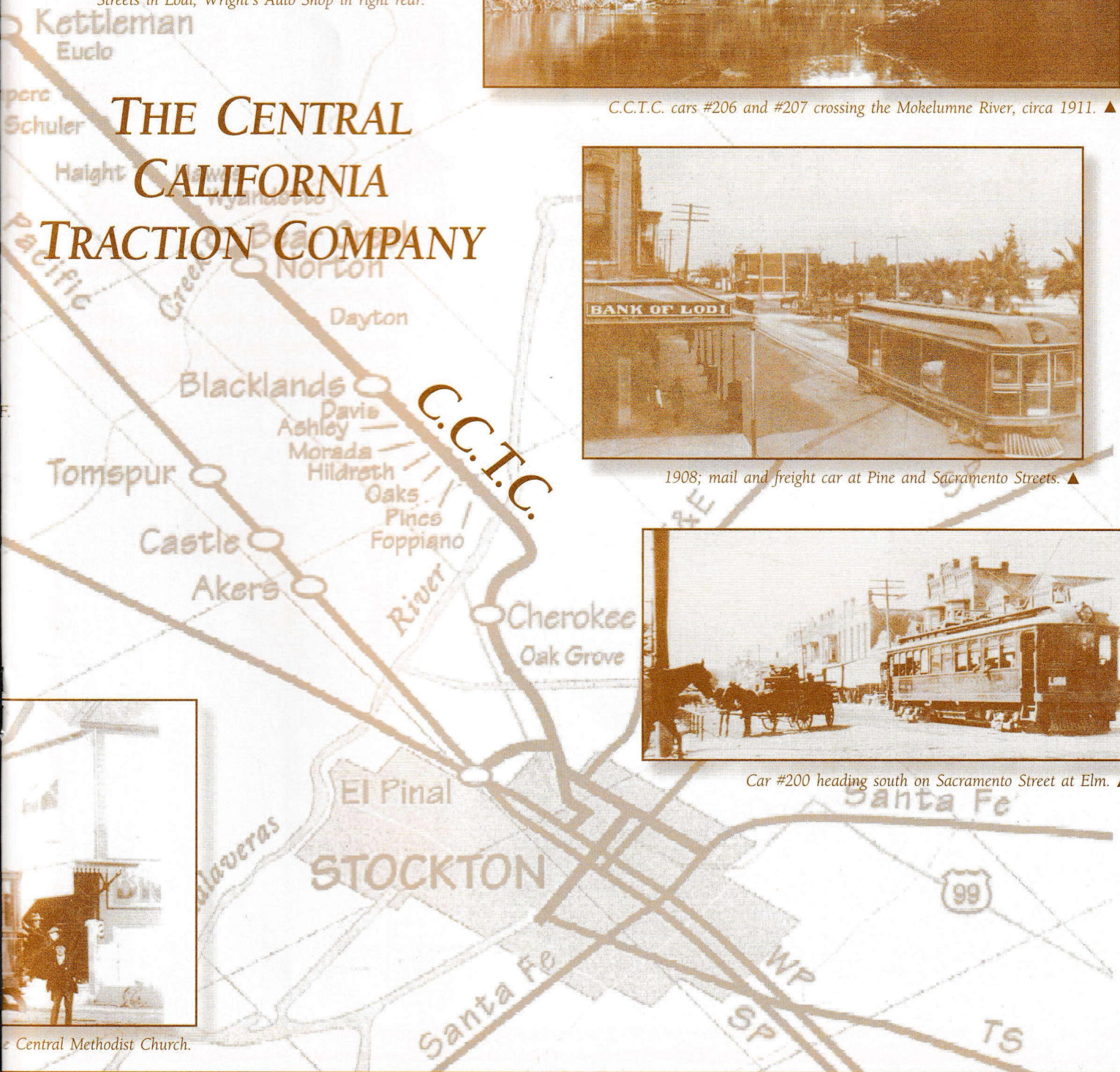


Traction electric car #201 at Sacramento and Locke Ford Streets in Lodi, Wright's Auto Shop in right rear. ▲



C.C.T.C. cars #206 and #207 crossing the Mokelumne River, circa 1911. ▲

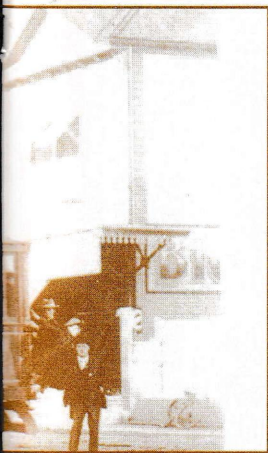
# THE CENTRAL CALIFORNIA TRACTION COMPANY



1908; mail and freight car at Pine and Sacramento Streets. ▲



Car #200 heading south on Sacramento Street at Elm. ▲



Central Methodist Church.





▲ Looking east on Lodi Avenue in the summer of 1907.

Agricultural Park (later called California State Fairgrounds). Bridges were built at the Mokelumne River, Dry Creek, Willow Creek, Consumnes River and Deer Creek. The Santa Fe Railway was to be a partner and use the CCTC rails between Stockton and Sacramento.

On May 26, 1910, the Hotel Stockton opened. The railway and American River Electric Co. leased a 60' x 60' space at the southwest corner of the hotel to establish a new passenger

depot and general offices for both companies.

The Sacramento extension was completed July 29, 1910 near Arno Road with a symbolic last spike. Three days later the first train left Sacramento at 1:00 p.m. with owners, Herbert and Mortimer Fleishhacker; George Peltier, manager; Samuel Naphtaly, superintendent and Walter Arnsten, secretary. The ticket to Stockton cost \$1.35 and allowed 150 pounds of baggage. The

53.1 mile trip was an hour and 50 minute ride with fifteen stops, but the express trains stopped only at Oak Park, Colonial Heights, Sheldon, Herald and Lodi Junction on the way to Stockton.

Not only did CCTC have an alliance with A.T.&S.F. but you could transfer from Sacramento to Marysville and Chico on the Northern Electric with either freight or passenger trains departing every hour. The CCTC had 36 daily passenger trains.

The CCTC had plans to build a railway from Stockton to Modesto. Another rail company the San Joaquin Valley Electric received a franchise and built their line. Business did not work out and by March of 1913 they shut down.

The first CCTC streetcars were painted red. The electric coaches from Lodi to Sacramento were a Pullman green and much later yellow was the official color, but red did make a come back.



▲ May 4, 1911; A three car train from Sacramento at the Stockton Hotel.

Photo courtesy of Keen Meeker



## SPECIAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

Conductors of all trains will obtain clearance from Dispatchers before leaving terminals.

Conductors of freight trains will report at all sidings provided with telephones at which they are doing work.

Bold face type indicates meeting point of trains. The number in small type in corner indicates number of opposing train.

Trains will not pass stations ahead of time unless by special order of Dispatchers.

Conductors will report to Dispatchers immediately upon arrival at meeting point if opposing train is not within sight.

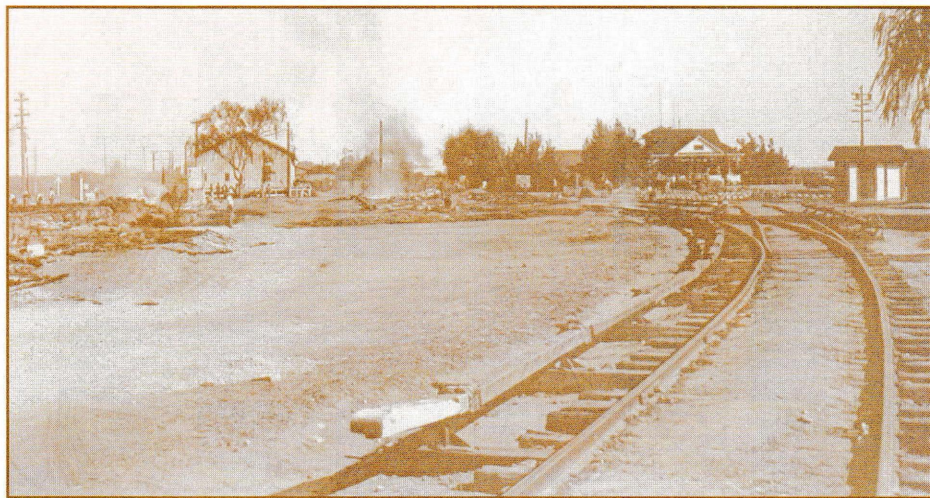
Delays and cause of same will be reported from nearest telephone.

Southbound trains will be under complete control when passing car house near Stockton.

Signal lights will be used between car house and East Street, Stockton, when cars are off schedule and at all times during foggy weather.

Whistles must not be used within corporate limits of Stockton or Lodi except in emergency to avoid accidents or as call for crossing when blocked by steam railroad trains.

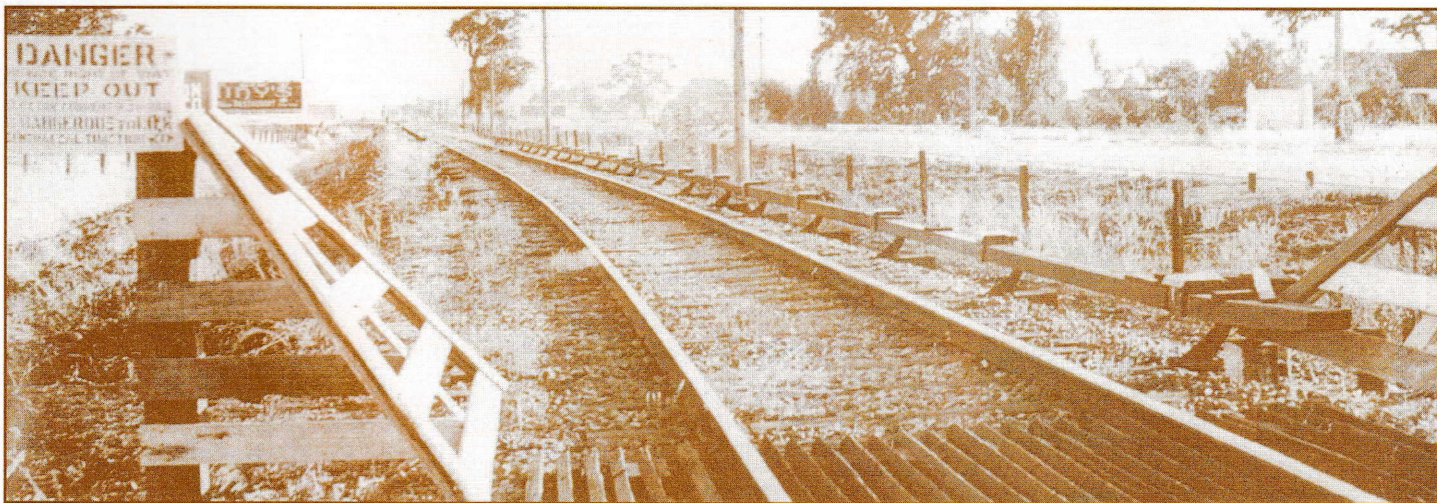
Bell must be sounded continuously at approach of street crossings in Stockton and Lodi.



Youngstown; October 10, 1932. Bucks home on right rear, Bucks shed in center. ▲ Notice the third rail on left of track.



Lodi Avenue east of Cherokee Lane. Mickey Shed on left with Seaside Gas, ▲ and Richfield Station in the right rear.

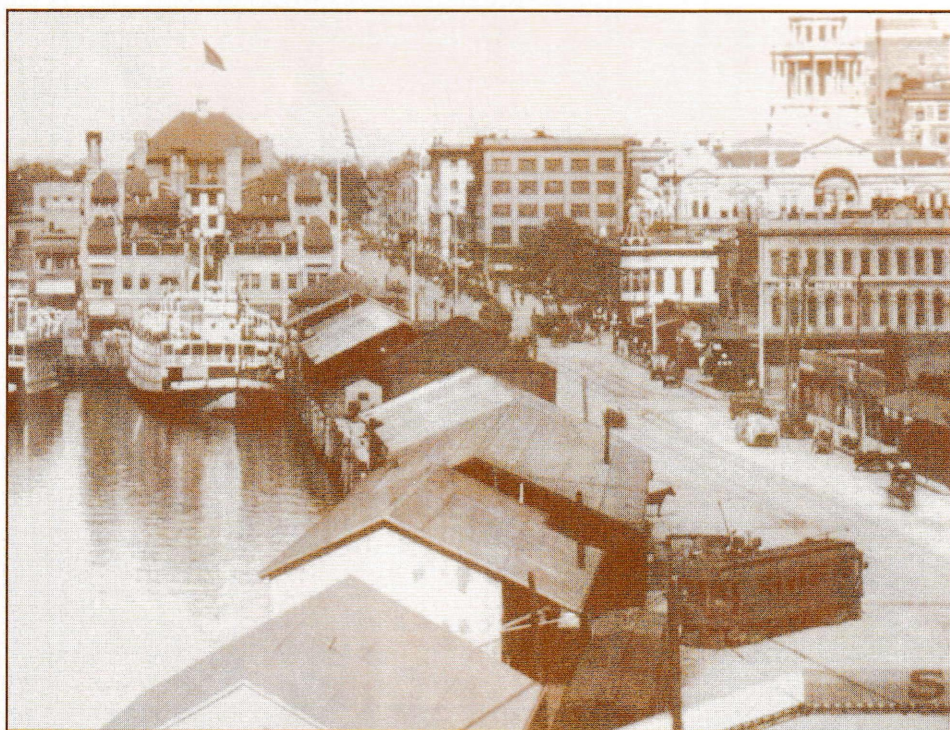


▲ Newton Road crossing in Northeast Stockton, a cattle guard protecting the third rail.





▲ Sacramento Street south of Pine Street, Lodi.



▲ 1915; Weber Avenue in Stockton. A CCT interurban car awaits its scheduled departure time at the waterfront freight dock.  
*Courtesy the Bank of Stockton Historical Photo Collection.*

County road crossing of Cherokee Lane near both Stockton and Lodi must be approached with extreme caution.

By city ordinances speed of trains within corporate limits of Stockton and Lodi is limited to ten (10) miles per hour.

By 1915 the CCTC had leased most of its Stockton streetcar lines to the Stockton Electric Railroad. Nineteen years later the CCTC was facing a financial crisis so H. S. Fleishhacker, the principal owner, contacted the Santa

Fe, Southern Pacific and Western Pacific Railroads regarding the purchase CCTC. The Southern Pacific was the only one interested at the time and offered three million dollars for the company.

The takeover caused an outrage among Lodi shippers and growers of grapes because it gave the Southern Pacific a monopoly. The Interstate Commerce Commission held a hearing and on August 16, 1927 they approved

the sale provided that the CCTC was divided three ways between the Santa Fe, Western Pacific and Southern Pacific.

The depression of 1929 and early 1930's prompted general manager F. W. Webster to suggest to traffic manager W. P. Jennings that the company purchase several parcels of vacant land for future use as industrial sites along company tracks in Lodi, Stockton and Sacramento.

In Lodi a four block long spur track branching off of Lodi Avenue at Main Street and crossing Tokay Street provided service to the California Co-op Producers Canning Co. (later Foster & Wood). In addition Neuhuff Packing, Pacific, American, Stewart, Tracy and Waldron Fruit Companies would all be served by CCTC.

The Southern Pacific Railroad, both an independent and a partner in CCTC, was already serving the cannery from their main line. It would be December 1931 before the I.C.C. approved this new line.

There were also three packing sheds, Atlas Iron, Super-mold and Almond Growers being served off the Sacramento St. Line north of Lockeford Street. The increased freight business was just in time as the passenger service was in trouble. The inter-urban was very popular at first with a rider ship of 1,394,293 in 1925, but with improved roads, development of the automobile and motor bus service rider ship was down to 840,293 by 1931.

The Youngstown fire of October 10, 1932 destroyed the freight station and the Frank H. Buck and Producers Fruit Co. Packing Sheds.

In February of 1933, CCTC shut down its passenger service and abandoned its 32 waiting stations. In May of 1933 the traction Co. closed its freight house on Stockton's waterfront at Weber Ave. and Madison Street and a new freight depot was built at Wilson Way allowing for a mile of Weber Ave. track to be removed which pleased many Stockton civic leaders.



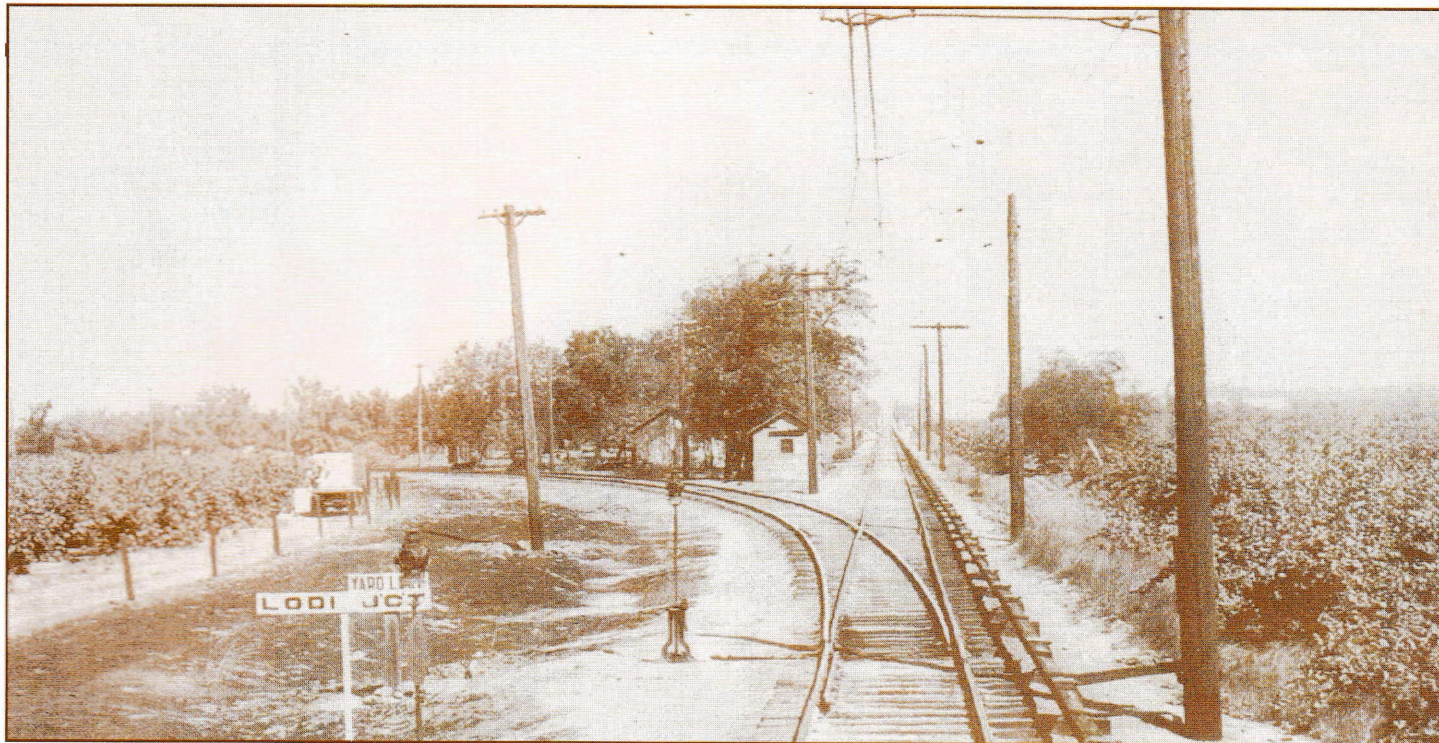


Photo courtesy of Vernon J. Sappers

C.C.T.C. Lodi Junction; on turning left the electric pickup was converted to overhead trolley wire. ▲

Starting in 1934 the Bear Creek Winery opened at the Wyandotte Station and Eastside Winery was completed on the south side of Victor Road at Goodwin Station. Two years later Cherokee Winery opened on the south side of Woodbridge Road near Dougherty Station which was changed to Cherokee. This winery is now Robert Mondavi's Woodbridge.

It was on November 14 of 1940 that the contractor S.M. McGaw began

removing the original main line on Wilson Way between Park Street and Waterloo Road in Stockton. In 1946 the CCTC decided to convert from electric to diesel and by the end of the year two 44 ton, 380 horsepower diesel locomotives, at a cost of \$43,000 each, had been purchased. In the next few months three 70 ton 600 horsepower diesel switchers were added at \$66,000 each.

Business was brisk on the CCTC during the 1950's. Over 124 shippers

were served. Stokely-van Camp located its new cannery in Lodi and used both the CCTC and the S.P.

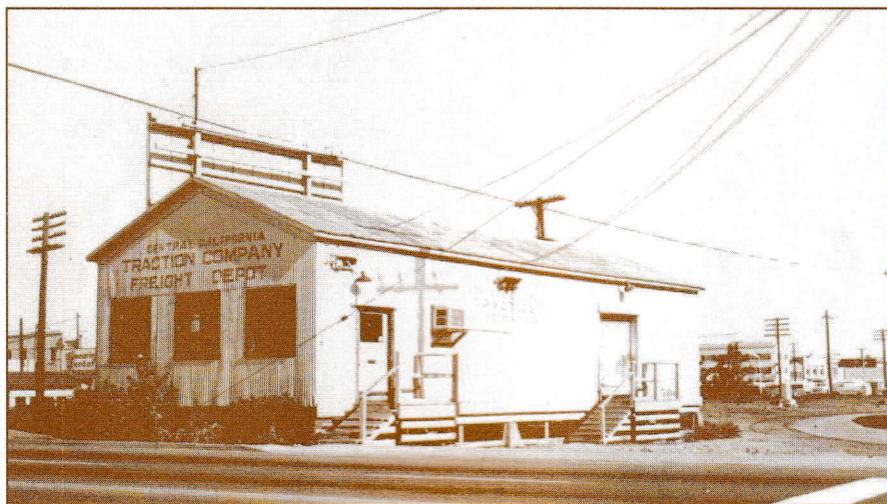
At the same time the tracks on Sacramento St. in Lodi were abandoned from the Southern Pacific Main Line Crossing to Daisy Ave a total of 4,687 feet. The Otto F. Beckman and Mason Fruit Co. grape shippers were the only remaining businesses cut off. The City of Lodi had been pressuring for the abandonment as they planned a



▲ C.C.T.C. Ampere Station on Harney Lane, circa 1969; the power generator on right for the third rail before 1947.

Photo courtesy of J. M. Lekas





◀ C.C.T.C. Freight Station in Lodi, California; April 24, 1971.  
Photo courtesy of Henry E. Bender, Jr.



▶ John Wright standing on the abandoned C.C.T.C. rail in north San Joaquin County.  
Photo courtesy of Norma Reeves



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downtown underpass. The rails were paved over and portions were removed later. In 1959 the Lodi Avenue track was rebuilt from Cherokee Lane to Stockton St. with new ties and 100lb rails. In 1960 trains went back to the earlier colors of chrome yellow with a red trim. Later red was used with white trim.

Starting in the 1970's the CCTC was still handling 40% of the Tokay and juice grape crop. Packing sheds at the Ampere, Haight, Wood Lake, Dougherty and Youngstown Stations were all being served by trucks which was detrimental to the CCTC. They reduced their service to three runs of freight trains to businesses mostly at night.

Things went slowly downhill in the 1990's until June 12, 1998 when

the main line from Milepost 15.1 to 41.9 was removed from service.

In January 2003 a \$6.7 million upgrading of the remaining 12.8 miles of track from Stockton to Lodi Junction plus 0.6 miles west on the Lodi Branch was completed. California's last inter-urban is still alive and thriving.

## REFERENCES & CREDITS

The Central California  
Traction Company by  
David G. Stanley and  
Jeffrey J. Moreau